



Leadership Enrichment Series

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland
Leading as the Savior Would Lead

November 9, 2011

BROTHER RALPH CHRISTENSEN: Brothers and sisters, welcome. I'm Ralph Christensen from the Human Resources Department, and it is a great pleasure to welcome you to this Leadership Enrichment Series session, which we've entitled "A Conversation with Elder Holland on Leading as the Savior Would Lead." It is an honor to have Elder Jeffrey R. Holland here. What a marvelous opportunity it is, Elder Holland, to sit with you and to have you with us and have the opportunity for you to teach us on this topic—what I consider one of the more spiritual and important topics that we might come together and talk about—"Leading as the Savior Would Lead."

I want to acknowledge Elder Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I want to acknowledge his sweetheart, Sister Patricia Holland, who is also here. Sister Holland, it is marvelous to have you here with us as well.

INTRODUCTION

BROTHER RALPH CHRISTENSEN: We've talked in each of these sessions a little bit about the pattern for leadership and how it was developed in conversations between Human Resource leadership and many of the senior Brethren of the Church as they've identified the kind of characteristics and qualities they're looking for in us as leaders of the Church's workforce. As I think about these six elements in the center of the pattern for leadership, these are elements that you might find in any large, complex, global organization.

Now, as we apply our particular principles and doctrine to them, we believe that we enhance our understanding of what those principles are. The three spiritually grounded principles are, however, very unique to us, and they are the things that make us different from any other organization on the planet. I consider it a privilege today to take what is, in my mind, the most important of those—how we can lead as the Savior would lead—and have Elder Holland teach us on this particular topic.

I'd like to give a few thoughts about how to best take advantage of this opportunity today. Most important of anything, I would invite each of us to have a prayer in our heart that the Holy Ghost would teach us uniquely what we need to learn. There will be many things said, but I suspect that there will be a thousand different lessons learned if we listen to the Holy Ghost teach us specifically the things that we need. We invite you to each take notes on the handout that was given to you. There are some questions on the back that might help focus some of your thinking. Particularly, it should help you plan how you will be able to go back into the work area and discuss and review how you can apply the principles that we'll talk about today in your work area. We invite you to go to the leadership pattern website;¹ it has a number of both insights and tools that you can use in applying these things.

In terms of our format, it will be very similar to what we've done in the past. We want to keep this informal and interactive as much as we can. We're going to begin by my posing some questions on this topic to Elder Holland. He'll have the opportunity to respond. And then after probably half of the time is spent, Elder Holland, we'll open it up to question and answer, if that would be okay. And so we invite you to be thinking about questions that you might want to pose to Elder Holland. When we get to that point, we would ask you to stand if you have a question.



That way those who have the microphones can see where you are and can come and find you, and Elder Holland will respond to those questions.

At the conclusion of the question and answer, we'll have an opportunity for Elder Holland to share any final comments or testimony that he might have.

Now Elder Holland, if it's all right, I've chosen to forgo any lengthy introduction, although it would be very easy to do that. We have come to know you and to love you for the things that you've taught. I'll tell you what I'd like to do, if I might. Rather than an introduction of Elder Holland, I'd invite each of you to think for just a minute of a particular talk that Elder Holland has given that has stuck with you. I can think of many, but I'll share the one I was pondering last night. Whenever I think of you, Elder Holland, this talk comes to mind. About 12 years ago you told a story of you and your sweetheart leaving St. George.

ELDER JEFFREY R. HOLLAND: True story.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: You were a young couple. And if I remember right, you got to Kanarraville twice.

ELDER HOLLAND: Twice, that's right.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: On that trip the car was just finished—it was not going to go anywhere. I jotted down just a quote that I've enjoyed. In your talk you said the service station attendant, or the person attending to you, asked, "How far have you come?" ... "Thirty-four miles," I answered. "How much farther do you have to go?" "Twenty-six hundred miles," I said. "Well, *you* might make that trip, and *your wife* and those two little kiddies might make that trip, but *none of you* are going to make it in *that car*"² (*laughter*).

ELDER HOLLAND: All true. He was prophetic (*laughs*).

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: I enjoyed that because I couldn't help but think of the several 2,600-mile trips I have made without a car that I needed, figuratively, and how grateful I was to remember that the Lord will come in and will provide when we have faith. So we all thank you for your teaching today and for the things that you have taught us.

ELDER HOLLAND: Thank you.

THE "WHY"—FOCUS ON THE SAVIOR

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Why don't we begin. I have a list of questions.

The world, Elder Holland, often talks about leadership in terms of techniques, style, and skills. And yet in contrast to that, it seems that before the Savior Jesus Christ went out to lead, He *became* something. And I'd be very interested to hear your comments about what we need to *become* if we're going to lead as the Savior would lead.

ELDER HOLLAND: Well, Ralph, that's a great lead-off question. May I say at the outset how honored I am, how humbled I am, to be with you. I don't feel equal to this task and (*to the audience*) I don't feel equal to you, your strength, and the service that you represent. You are so good, so respectful of us in our callings, and I don't minimize that; I respect the calling as well. I know what you do, and I feel very humbled by considering those of you gathered in this room as well as those who will hear this out in the field on our taped distribution. So I need to say thank you. I'm very honored that you would come, and I only pray that something I say will be worthy of this topic—leading as the Savior leads.

I think as leaders, in the Church and out, sometimes we're too inclined to rush into tactical things. We're too inclined to jump on the issue at hand, dive right in, but we ought to start with a larger view. We should sit back, take a deep breath,



and ask ourselves what is it that we're trying to do here, and get the big picture—get the vision. There's a line in the 4th chapter of John where the Savior says to His own disciples (who don't yet understand all that much about what He's doing), "Lift up your eyes" (verse 35). He invites them to see the big picture, to get the vision. I think in this audience we ought to "lift up our eyes" well beyond the immediate issues of MLS or real estate or finance or HR or whatever it is that we do, and ask ourselves not only what are we doing, but why we are doing it. And in the Church, that is to focus us on the Savior.

A plumber's immediate task would be to see that the pipes hold water. That's the immediate issue at hand. But the larger issue is, Do our lives hold water? Does our theology hold water? We'll feel more like we're doing the work of the Lord in little ways if we can keep that big picture.

Somebody as irreligious as Friedrich Nietzsche said, "He who has a why to live can bear with almost any how."³ Or, to paraphrase, if you can tell me *why*, I will figure out *how*. I'm not sure we spend enough time telling each other *why*. Maybe we assume it. In the Church it's easy to assume it. But maybe it shouldn't be assumed. The other day one of my Brethren in the Twelve said, "Those things that go without saying probably should be said." And maybe we need to remind ourselves why we're doing all these things that we do in all these departments. Ultimately it is to lead people to Christ, it is to become like Christ, it is to live the way He lived and act the way He acted. And probably if we succeeded at that, almost all of our departmental issues would disappear. Much of the work we're now doing in a temporal, telestial way would get lifted up in the wonder of a millennial city of Enoch, and life would be a lot better.

So at least some of our time as leaders should be spent as you've started here: setting vision, focusing on the Savior, talking the talk of the heart, and helping people understand *why*. Then we can team up, join in the tactical part, and all together figure out *how*.

In the end, I would encourage you to ask yourself (many times a day), "Why am I doing this?" "Why do I work for the Church?" "Why have I chosen to work for the Church as opposed to working for someone else?" And I hope there's always a tremendously distinctive reason *why*—a genuine reason. Some of our reasons and motivations would apply to anyone in any corporate setting anywhere in the world. But some of them are unique to the Church and to the gospel of Jesus Christ: they focus us on the Savior.

Furthermore, as a personal reassurance to you managers in the room—because leadership is not an easy assignment; it's not always a fun task—I think it helps you personally as well as your people, your departments, if you can remember why you are doing this. That helps you get through some bad days, some tough decisions, and some disappointments. It will be easier to do what you do for the Savior, for eternal purposes, for the gospel of Jesus Christ, than it might be if you just had to do it for IBM or AT&T or General Motors or some other employer. Worthy as they are, I don't think they are as good an employer as the Church. I invite all of you to think more about focusing on the Savior, having that be the backdrop for the tactical things you do. Life will be a lot easier, a lot simpler, and a lot better.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: That's great and very helpful.

THE SAVIOR'S LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: As you think about the particular characteristics that the Savior portrayed in all aspects of His leadership—pre-earthly, earthly, and since—are there particular characteristics that come to your mind that we ought to ponder and think about?

ELDER HOLLAND: I think somewhere along the way, you and I talked briefly, Ralph, about when in leadership do you reprove "betimes with sharpness"? (D&C 121:43). How do you measure that need against long-suffering and patience? Of course when we talk about the Savior, it's always the long-suffering and the patience that wins out.



We think of Christ as the personification of love. I believe one of the reasons He came was not only to atone for our sins but also to show us the love of God. He said to people who wanted to see the Father, “If you’ve seen me, if you’ve watched me act and if you’ve watched me live, you’ve seen the way the Father acts and lives.” For all intents and purposes, that was always loving; it was always gentle and kind.

Now then, the exception: this idea of reproof. I suppose we all face that quandary in leadership issues. When do you get tough? All I can say about that is to be careful. An old adage is “He whom the gods would destroy, they first make angry.”⁴ I can honestly say (and I’m embarrassed to say it) that I can hardly think of anything I have ever done in anger that I did not live to regret.

There is probably righteous indignation, but usually it’s just indignation. Maybe this rule is good enough: If you ever find anyone changing money in the temple, you can get mad (*laughter*). That seems to be an acceptable reason.⁵ But short of that, be careful. Bite your tongue. Count to 50 and try again. Because that’s what the Savior did. I think we’ve overplayed the cleansing of the temple as an example of Christ’s “other side.” It does show how a God feels about sacred things, but the anger was an exception, not the rule.

You get those Doctrine and Covenants 121 qualities—we’re probably going to drift in and out of section 121 all day today, Ralph—and those virtues from section 4 that we all memorized as missionaries. Those are lovely, spiritual, gentle qualities: faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, and so forth. Maybe those are not the leadership tips that you’d glean out in the world, but they’re surely the essential leadership characteristics of the Savior.

That’s a long answer to a short question, but when I think of the Savior, I think of someone who was gentle, who was patient, who was forgiving, who measured two or three or four or five times before He ever did show what little anger he showed. Maybe I’m reflecting my own inadequacy, but I want to err on the side of forbearance, forgiveness, and long-suffering rather than anger.

Most of us say we are committed to these ideas, that we would like to be long-suffering; we just don’t want to suffer and we don’t want it to last very long (*laughter*). When you sign on in the gospel, you’ve signed on for some genuine refinement of the soul. We will have a chance to exercise gentleness a lot more than most leaders would be expected to in a secular setting.

UNRIGHTEOUS DOMINION

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: You said that we may wander into Doctrine and Covenants 121. Let me wander for just a minute in that direction. One of the parts of section 121 that I’ve thought a lot about over the years is where it says, “It is the nature and disposition of almost all” (verse 39). And I find that troubling.

ELDER HOLLAND: Because you’re included.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Yes, I’m included (*laughter*). “Almost all . . . , as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose”—and I think we have a little authority, yet I don’t think that’s the problem. The problem seems to be that they then “immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion” (D&C 121:39). How do we overcome this inclination that apparently we all have toward unrighteous dominion?

ELDER HOLLAND: You’re asking one of the questions of eternity. But it does get at the heart of leadership in the Church. It does harken back to our opening lines that the big task is to be like the Savior. Then the little tasks will, finally and remarkably, take care of themselves—or be well on their way to taking care of themselves. So these are legitimate leadership questions.



Think of the phrase “unrighteous dominion.” In your mind, shift from that being a personality style or a leadership flaw—which is usually the way we read it—to being a place. *Where*, rather than *what*, is unrighteous dominion? Any suggestions? This is informal. Please, in the back?

FEMALE PARTICIPANT: Satan, Hades.

ELDER HOLLAND: Yes, where Satan rules. That is, I think, the ultimate unrighteous dominion. Well, nobody wants to work in Hades—you don’t and none of your employees do. And your children don’t and your spouse doesn’t—we don’t want to live there; we don’t want to be there. That may help us combat this tendency in “almost all” of us. Acknowledging that it doesn’t solve human nature. But it may remind us of what we’re doing when we exercise unrighteous dominion.

When we exercise unrighteous dominion as a characteristic, a personality tendency, then we’re creating something that is unholy. It is dark and evil. I think it’s fair to say that it’s satanic. That’s what comes to your mind and that’s what comes to mine. His is *the* unrighteous dominion. So let’s just stay out of his realm. Let’s fight our way out of it if we are in it. It’s not so easy to do. We get caught up in the moment or we have tendencies toward short temper or disappointment or irritability or we’re tired or we’re sick. That all plays into it. But we need to resist unrighteousness in *any* dominion. That’s a great truth taught in Doctrine and Covenants 121.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: I suspect that part of that is, again, recognizing that it is “almost all” of us—that we have that tendency. And until we recognize that, there’s no way we’re going to overcome it. I think it starts there.

ELDER HOLLAND: Absolutely.

KNOW HIM AND REMEMBER HIM

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: If the Savior is to become our Exemplar, that suggests that we need to come to not only know *about* Him, but in a very real way, come to know *Him*. I would be very interested in any of your counsel and teachings on how we go beyond knowing about Him, and really come to know Him.

ELDER HOLLAND: The first thing that comes to mind is that we need to think about Him more than we do. Someone asked Isaac Newton once how he came to realize, specifically the law of gravity, but overall, Newtonian physics. He said straightforwardly, “I thought about it all the time.”⁶ You’ve prompted a scripture. Are we free to use the scriptures? (*laughter*).

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Yes, please. We have two sets.

ELDER HOLLAND: I don’t get marked down, then, if I use the scriptures? Of the many, many passages in King Benjamin’s sermon that I love, I think this near-concluding verse may cap off the whole sermon, one of the most wonderful sermons in the scriptures. This is King Benjamin at the end: “For how knoweth a man the master whom he has not served, and who is a stranger unto him, and is far from the thoughts and intents of his heart?” (Mosiah 5:13). I love that verse.

How can we emulate someone we hardly know? That is your question, Ralph. I’m just rephrasing it in the language of the scriptures. How can we emulate someone who is far from our thoughts, far from the intents of our heart, who is a stranger to us? So it is your question and mine today: “Is the Savior too much of a stranger to us? Is He too far from the thoughts of our hearts?”



Here is Alma to his son Helaman: “Cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever” (Alma 37:36).

I love the scriptures, and I love those phrases. “The affections of thy heart.” It would be a good little interview with ourselves to ask, “How much of the affections of my heart are placed on the Lord? How often do I think about Him?” The underlying, fundamental pledge of the sacrament prayer as we offer it each Sunday is to remember.⁷ We have the specific elements of that prayer, but the recurring phrase is “to remember.” I’m not sure we remember Him enough. I’m not sure we think about Him enough. And just remembering wouldn’t do it all, but that would be a first step if you say you’re going to be like Him. How do you do that if you are a manager within the Church? I’d like to have Him in my thoughts more, more central in my dreams and visions and images for the department. At least that would be a first step.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: As you said that, Elder Holland, I couldn’t help but ask the question personally, “So where is my heart?” That was one of the references you made. “And how much of my heart is really focused on Him and how much of my heart really is focused on other things?” If it’s on other things, we’re not likely to come to know Him.

ELDER HOLLAND: That’s right, Ralph. We have demands in life. My wife, Pat, is in the room, and we’ve talked about this. We’ve talked about praying always and the practicality of that. You have to drive a car, and you’ve got to be careful that you catch a traffic light at the right time and don’t nip a pedestrian. In life you have to have your mind on your business. And you have to do that in your departments. But there is something about a prayer in your heart or an attitude or affection in your heart that can be more constant for us than it presently is.

I think you can be watching out for pedestrians or reading balance sheets—or whatever it is you do in your work out there—and still have a prayerful heart, a devoted spirit, something in you that says, “behind all of this is my love of the Lord, and I’m trying to remember Him always.” That’s a haunting, precise, and declarative line from the sacrament prayer. We’re supposed to remember Him always. And we’ll have to find a way to do that. Even with the busyness of life, even with the pick-and-shovel duties that we have to do to earn a living by the sweat of our brow, I’m sure there’s a way for us to remember Him always.

WE’RE IN THIS TOGETHER

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: One of the marvelous things about the great principle of repentance is that it requires us to do a self-assessment and to be honest about it so that I really know who I am and where I am so that I can become better. As I think about the leadership pattern, I wonder, How do we make self-assessments against these nine characteristics? Particularly for this characteristic, I find myself often thinking about how we can do an assessment of where we are as leaders in terms of following Christlike examples or leading as the Savior would.

I guess the question is, How do we do that? Particularly as leaders, who should do that? Should the manager of the employee be assessing something as sacred as whether or not the employee is leading as the Savior would lead? Or is that better left as a self-assessment? How would you think about this process of assessing where we are compared to this marvelous Exemplar?

ELDER HOLLAND: Well, I hear two questions. Let me try to separate those. The first question about *how* you do it would be related to this idea of thinking about the Savior, having the affections of our heart placed on Him so that He’s not a stranger to us. That ties back to our earlier comment about that task.

But the second part of that question is, How do we find *time* to do that? Time is always our enemy. I’ve long since realized that I will never have any money in this life. That’s okay; I’ve dealt with that. What matters to me now is time, including my relationships and activities that can come in that time: teaching time, family time, service time,



reflective time. So, time is sacred. I know the pressures; we all live with them. But we tend to say, “I don’t have time.” That is not true. We all have time. We all have all the time there is. Everybody has all the time that’s allotted. So what we really are asking is, “How can I better use my time? How can I be more careful with it?” Because what’s been allotted has been allotted to all of us. We’ve all got 24 7.

We could all do more spiritually with our time, whether that’s in private, personal morning scripture study or whether it’s taking a little time to meditate at the lunch hour or taking five minutes for personal prayer mid morning or mid-afternoon. Related to *thinking* about Jesus Christ is *taking the time* to think about Him, to reflect and to pray and to keep this remembrance of Him in our hearts. And so that’s the answer to question number one. I would take the time to remember and reflect on Him.

The second question is, Who is to do the assessing? That is a challenge. Leadership in any corporation is sobering. None of us would like to be a judge. We have a hymn that says, “’Tis high to be a judge.”⁸ No one is comfortable in that role. But we have to do it; we have to make some careful managerial judgments at least.

I think both the employee and the employer have a responsibility here. The employee has every right to know what is expected. The times that I may have failed the most as a leader are the times that I didn’t convey the big vision adequately, and I was not careful enough or attentive enough to really help a colleague know what was expected. I just kind of said, “They’ll get the drift of it; they know what we’re about here.” But maybe they *don’t* know what we’re about, or they think they are doing the best they can, yet it isn’t what you or I expect.

An employee has every right to be taught and to have a clear understanding of how to answer the questions: What will I be evaluated on? What is the job at hand? How will I know if I have succeeded? He or she deserves to know that.

The flip side of that is that the leader—the employer, the manager—has to be committed to that person’s success. If I were a manager working with you, Ralph, and you didn’t succeed, that is at least as much my failure as yours. If you’re just impossible, if you’re Harry Hopeless, then that might be a category of its own, but I don’t think that happens very often. Most of the time, if you fail, I fail.

I can still remember the name and the face of a freshman at BYU who got the only D-minus I ever gave in my whole life. And that student has haunted me for 40 years. I said, “This kid is just not getting it.” And I gave him a D-minus. For 40 years I have berated myself that I would have been the kind of teacher in whose class someone couldn’t have done better than D-minus work. That was my failure, not his. He might not have been a straight-A student, but I think if I had been the kind of teacher I should have been, if I had invested something more in him, I could have made a C-minus or a C-plus student out of him.

We’re in this together. I don’t know who is the ultimate evaluator, but I think the employee deserves to know what his or her manager expects and that the manager must be committed to helping him or her succeed. Those kind of blend together for me. We do it together.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: As we have thought about these nine elements of the leadership pattern (the six in the middle are pretty standard things that you would see in other organizations), we envision a leader being able to have an assessment and encourage an assessment from the employee on those elements. With the three spiritual ones, however, we’ve been quite hesitant to assume that we as leaders play a role in making a spiritual judgment of the person. Yet we want to be clear that these are things that are expected. Our inclination has been to have the employees play the primary role on those three items for self-assessment.

ELDER HOLLAND: I think you have to. That’s what we do ecclesiastically. We teach the best we can, then defer to the individual. In tithing settlement, for example, we have the person declare whether he or she is a faithful tithe



payer. We teach, we describe, we emphasize, and we frame. But in the end, we say, “Brother Christensen, are you a faithful tithe payer?” And that’s his determination to make. I think that’s the way we have to help an employee assess his or her success.

But, we do have the teaching part, the expectation and lifting the vision part—the big picture. Maybe the way good colleagues turn into marvelous colleagues is through our teaching and lifting better, and they just keep climbing. But I think in the end, it’s their assessment on these personal, spiritual matters.

PEOPLE FIRST: REPROOF BETIMES

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: One of the ways the world tends to frame up leadership is in terms of leaders who focus on tasks versus those who focus on people. I don’t think we ought to polarize it quite that much, but there are leaders who frame by task or people. How did the Savior balance the focus on task—because He got a lot done—and the focus on people, which He was so marvelous at?

ELDER HOLLAND: He always started with the people. He always saw standing before Him a child of God. There were tasks for these people to do—some of it was personal repentance and some of it was moving the kingdom forward collectively—everything from the immediate to the grand. But He always started with people.

God is in the people business. His work and His glory is to save individuals and families. I think of the lessons in the Creation, those marvelous lessons and grand issues of Eden. Everything provided in the Creation was for Adam and Eve’s sake—some of it taxing and testing and difficult, a lot of it bountiful and beautiful. It seems to me that God wasn’t worried about the light and the dark, the sea and the land, the beasts and the fish of the sea nearly as much as He was concerned about Adam and Eve and their posterity. So I think we, too, start with the people. Then, when we’ve got our arms around each other and we have a gospel bond, when we see the image of the Savior out ahead of us, then we can tackle the world; tasks start to fall like dominos.

You’re right, the Savior focused on both tasks and people, but if you pressed me on priority and sequence, I’d have to say He always focused on the worth of the people first, and then came what they were to accomplish.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: The thought that comes to my mind as you say that is that it’s always people who accomplish the tasks. So the people piece has to be there.

ELDER HOLLAND: Yes, and the task is ultimately incidental to building the people. What we really want to do is build people. They’ll have to do certain tasks to become godlike in whatever they’re trying to learn, and that includes the very kind of mundane, secular, temporal tasks that we do to make a living. But somehow in the end, all of that is supposed to build us as children of God.

If you got the task accomplished but devastated the people in the process, that doesn’t work. That isn’t what we’re about. So, protect the people. Let’s say a word about reproving “betimes with sharpness” again because sometimes you have to do hard things. But you have to lift people in the process, so you must be gentle and careful and wonderful about how you do this.

Think of this, if you will, in “reproving betimes with sharpness” (D&C 121:43). What if *sharpness* meant “precise” rather than “slashing” and “brutal”? I looked up *betimes* in the dictionary once, and it is true that one of the definitions of *betimes*—the third one listed—was “occasionally.” You can reprove occasionally with sharpness. But the other two definitions—the first and second listed—were “soon” and “early.”

So, reproving sharply might mean, “Don’t let it fester; don’t let it get worse than it is; don’t let a blister removal become an amputation.” If we will be a little more proactive and a little more helpful on the front end, our reproving



duties might be smaller. If you see a problem, deal with it early and upfront. Don't let it get away from you. And your reproving should be precise. Don't blame someone for *everything*. Haven't you all had discussions with your children or with your spouse or with someone, and when you get really exercised, what you end up saying is, "Well, you always..." Nobody does anything *always*. That isn't a very precise piece of criticism. Those children don't *always* leave their clothes on the floor, just some of the time. To generalize, to apply such a broad brush and to tar everything and everyone isn't a very "sharp" reproof. It is better to be focused and say, "This is the issue right now, right here; let's deal with it early and precisely (sharply) and move on."

That suggests another aspect of reproof. This is personal, but I don't believe in delaying reproof if you have to give it. If I'm dealing with a child, I'm going to deal with him or her then on the spot. I'm not going to say, "Wait until eight o'clock tonight, and then I'm going to explode." You are likely to turn it into a tragedy by then. Remember this is reproof prompted by the Holy Ghost. Be sure of that, offer it, and then move on. That, for me, is an aspect of "reproving betimes with sharpness."

I'm not sure how we got on this reproof issue except that you were saying sometimes we have to do hard things, and that includes reproof. But that really ought to be seldom. As I said before, I do not believe in letting anger take over. It's been a disaster for me.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Thank you. As you're saying that, I'm reminded of the Prophet Joseph Smith when he said, "I admonish them because I love them."⁹ I think intention is a really important part of this conversation. Anything that we do, what is the motive? If it's love, they will feel that. If it's that we're just angry, they will feel that too.

ELDER HOLLAND: Yes, and if you're having a bad day and you want everybody else to have one, that's pretty easily recognized. We do know that there is chastening. The Lord is clear that those whom He loves, He chastens.¹⁰ But we'd better learn how to do it and we'd better do it as carefully as He did it. Christ becomes the gold standard in this. He wasn't very angry very much of the time; He was infinitely patient. He is the standard. We think about Him and do it His way.

LEADING WITH FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: I will ask one final question, and then we'll turn the time to questions the audience might have.

I make no pretense at all of understanding the Atonement as well as I would like to, but in my own experiencing of the power of the Atonement, one of the effects I feel is that it gives me a sense of peace and a sense of hopefulness when otherwise life might be hopeless because of sin or because of the burdens of life. I'd be interested in your comments about how the Savior instills that sense of hopefulness and peace and confidence, as opposed to fear and anxiety in His approach to leadership.

ELDER HOLLAND: This is the Church of happy endings. The gospel is a dream come true from the beginning. It's just that we get to live out the dream. But we know how it (the dream) ends. You go through the scriptures, and they are filled with all that God has promised us, all that He's given, all that He wants us to have, the love that He demonstrates—that's what these scriptures are about. This is to help us see the end from the beginning in much of life. In most of secular life you can't do that, but in the gospel, that is the entire point—that you get to see the end from the beginning. We know where this can lead, and with faith, repentance, the ordinances of the gospel, and Christian living, where it will lead. It's not only outlined clearly, but it's promised. There's an exclamatory promise that this will be so. Every word of the Lord will be fulfilled; every utterance of His mouth will be realized. There is no reluctance in these scriptures or in the teaching of the Brethren to be exclamatory and powerful in declaring



that all the promises of the gospel are going to be realized. The Atonement of Jesus Christ, based on the love and goodness of God, makes all those blessings possible.

The three, great Christian imperatives are faith, hope, and charity. Those are the essential elements of the Atonement. It is the single-greatest charitable act of time and eternity on the part of both the Father and the Son. (Sometimes I think we fail a little bit to remember what the Father went through, in giving the gift, as well as the Son's role in carrying out the gift.) Yes, the Atonement is the essence of charity; it is the greatest act of love ever demonstrated. As such, it fills us with hope, as Mormon writes to Moroni in Moroni 7 of the Book of Mormon. It specifically gives us hope in the Resurrection and all that means for our perfection. We need to do more in this regard to think of the perfection of our moral sense and the perfection of our heart and the perfection of human relationships and the perfection of our family ties, as well as the perfection of the body. We've been a little too restrictive in our view of the Resurrection. We think resurrection just means that you get your hair back, Ralph (*laughter*). But resurrection is more than that. It's a symbol for all perfection. Everything gets restored, and we have it in a perfected state if we want it and have lived for it.

So, we get these blessings through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There isn't any other way; there's no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved.¹¹ Parliaments or Congress or kings or queens or justices of the peace—we cannot put ultimate faith and credence in those because they are human institutions. But in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in the Savior, we can put unlimited, uncompromised, total faith. So, with our faith and hope and charity, all of the promises in the scriptures and the gift of the Atonement are ours. No wonder it's the good news. No wonder it's really, *really* good news, the reason people sing and the reason they shout. Now, this brief conversation doesn't do justice to the Atonement, but in terms of your question, at least in terms of the hopefulness we all have in our hearts, there is nothing more hopeful in all eternity. And the Atonement was at the heart of the plan from the beginning.

You know that two missionaries were killed last night. I talked to one set of parents, and Elder Russell M. Nelson talked to the other. Surely if there is a time that your back is to the wall and you ask yourself what your faith really means, it would be if your son or daughter came home from his or her mission in a casket. That's not anything anyone counted on; it's not anything anyone would want. And there are comparable tragedies elsewhere in life, there are comparable heartaches in this room with children and loved ones and illnesses and so on. There are things that really do press us and push us, and we might be inclined to say, "Why?" or "Why me?" or "Why us?"

When we have these heartaches in our lives, when we have questions for which we do not have adequate answers, then I think we are obligated to cling ever more desperately to the things we do know. The things that we do know will get us past anything that we don't know. Because what we do know are things like the Atonement and the love of God that it reflects. We know that He is good and gracious and loving and kind. We know He doesn't have a brutal, malicious bone in His body. We know He could never do an evil thing and He's never hurt anybody, intentionally or otherwise. Life can hurt and circumstances can hurt, but God is prepared to address all of that and heal all of that. He is the Balm of Gilead.

When there are hard days at work or at home or in our marriage or with our children or our grandchildren or in the nation of Greece or Italy or Iraq or Afghanistan—pick a spot, pick an issue—we must cling to the things we know. What we know is that God is our Father and that Jesus Christ loves us perfectly. They both loved us and bowed Their heads and wept and said "yes" when it would have been easier to say "no" or say "I wish there were a different cup to drink." We know that everything works together for good to those who love God¹² and that the promise of the gospel gives solutions to our problems.

There could be 10,000 things that we're worrying about in this room today, but they are going to be okay. That's what those parents said to us on the phone today: "It's going to be okay. If our son has to go, we're glad he could go when he was at his very best." What an attitude, what an incredible attitude! That's a gift of the gospel. That's a gift because of what



we know. It's not a gift because of what we *don't* know or what we're worried about or what we wonder over. No, that faith comes from the firmness and conviction of our soul—our testimony, if you will. And that's available to all of us. We're supposed to have it. The prophets and apostles, leaders and the angels, God Himself and His Son, the Savior of the world, have all been trying to give us that for all these years, so let's embrace it. Let's receive it, and it will get us through. It is filled with faith and hope and charity. Cling to what you know when there are things you do not yet know.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Thank you so much. Let's turn to the audience and take some questions from them. Let's take the next half hour or so. If you have a question, please stand so we can see where you are.

LOVE CONQUERS FEAR

MALE PARTICIPANT: Elder Holland, Christ was known as the Master Teacher, and often in the Church we talk about teaching and leadership in the same vein. Christ often taught one-on-one. Imagine that someone came to you with a problem, with a project or a task or something like that, and they were either afraid or they weren't aware of what they needed to do. They just had some barrier that was blocking them. What questions would you ask or what things would you do to help them overcome those barriers?

ELDER HOLLAND: I'd take enough time to personalize it and to have them know I loved them like crazy—that I just loved them until it melted their shoes (*laughter*). I would try to know something about their life and their hopes and their dreams and their childhood and their favorite sport. I would get love clearly understood. That, it seems to me, conquers almost every fear. I'm back to our little triad of the Christian imperatives. We think of faith as the opposite of fear, but it's just as easy to offer charity and hope as the opposite of fear. Those three are always going to be inseparable in my mind and heart. So if someone is a little fearful, give some compassion, some charity, some hope. Those are just other ways of saying give them faith. Then when that's a little clearer, I think they can talk. I think they can then communicate what it is they desire.

I hope there would be the kind of relationship—that would allow you to come to me or I could come to you and we would know we would be dealt with carefully and lovingly. I could put my heart on my sleeve toward you and know it wouldn't be battered. If we can build that kind of a reputation, and have it be genuine, then we're a long way down the road on HR issues and about how personnel will feel in our employment and under our leadership.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Thank you.

MEEKNESS AND LOWLINESS

MALE PARTICIPANT: Could you tell me how meekness and lowliness of heart will help me be a better leader, as Jesus was?

ELDER HOLLAND: That's my wife's favorite subject (*laughter*). She represents those virtues better than anyone I know in the world.

We often don't think of meekness and lowliness as very striking leadership qualities. The temporal issue, the secular issue, is almost always "go get 'em"; you know, tear open your shirt to find a big S on your chest, and with your cape off you go, bounding over buildings. Meekness and lowliness of heart don't quite seem to fit in that. But I'll tell you why I think those are qualities that we have to seek for and to pursue. And I do pay tribute to Pat as the best example of it I know and who loves it and talks about the doctrine regularly.

In any leadership that we're discussing—leadership in these departments, in the Church, in the gospel—the only hope we've got is heavenly hope. We're not good enough. We're not smart enough. None of us have enough talent.



You can't go to enough schools. You can't go to enough seminars. I don't know how many posters HR can put up in the elevators (*laughter*), but it still isn't going to do it. No, in our work, in what we call leadership, we need to tap into the divine. We need help. That is all I can say. We need help. There's not a thing that I'm called on to do in this Quorum, in this calling, that I feel I'm equal to. There's not a single assignment I have where I think, "Oh, I'm smart enough to do that; I'm good enough to do that; I've had enough experience to do that." This work drives you to your knees. That is why I think meekness and lowliness of heart have to count in the gospel. Because without those virtues I don't think we get that full connection to heaven.

Section 43 of the Doctrine and Covenants talks about being endowed with power (see verse 16). That's what it takes to succeed in this Church. That's what it takes to succeed in the gospel—an endowment, a gift, from heaven. I don't know how to get that except to be meek and lowly of heart and say, "I cannot do this alone. I cannot make it on my own." At that point, the Lord says, "Okay, I am glad you recognize that because it's true. So I will endow you with power." And then the miracle starts; then the help comes.

I don't know whether someone working for Oracle or for any Fortune 500 company would tell you to be meek and lowly of heart or not. That might seem foreign out there in the secular world, but it's not foreign for us. It is a realization of our inadequacy, and if we don't think we're inadequate, we've got a problem. God will provide ways to remind you that you're inadequate (*laughter*). Don't tempt Him; don't push it; don't go there.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Thank you.

ELDER HOLLAND: There's a hand up here.

MOST POWERFUL LEADERSHIP LESSON

MALE PARTICIPANT: Elder Holland, how do we marry the principles of Doctrine and Covenants 121 with the desire to get it done now? We have a tendency to want to push to achieve an objective. How do we marry section 121 with getting the work done timely and well?

ELDER HOLLAND: That's a great question, and it really keeps us at the heart of this discussion. Section 121 says: "Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this *one* lesson—[I love that phrase because it gets pretty specific—*one* lesson. That almost sounds like reproving 'betimes with sharpness.' That's a sharp, precise note.] . . . that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness" (verses 34–36). That may well be the single most powerful leadership lesson I know to teach. I take section 121 at its word—that we don't learn this *one* lesson: "That the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled *only* upon the principles of righteousness." They use *only* in the 19th century way; *except* is a little more of a 21st century word—"cannot be controlled or handled [except] on the principles of righteousness."

I don't know whether that's going to let you get the job done as quickly. I don't know whether it's going to let you get it done as urgently, but you're not going to be able to get it done correctly if you ever stray from principles of righteousness. So in urging the guys or the gals on, they better be urged on with principles of righteousness. Because if it starts to be less than that or more abusive than that or less kind than that, then we've gained the world and lost our soul.¹³ I don't know where else to start except with that one lesson: that leadership can only be handled on "principles of righteousness." That is the Savior's living message to us.

I said that was one of the best leadership rules I know. It is. Another one that would be equal to it are three words from the New Testament: "Come, follow me" (Luke 18:22). Jesus says, "Just do it the way I do it. Talk the way I talk. Walk the way I walk. Treat people the way I treat people. Cry when I cry." That's the Savior's message: "Come, follow me."



Those are the opening lines of His ministry. In the early passages of both the Gospel of John and the Gospel of Matthew are references to this simple leadership tip: “Come, follow me.” And so—keep righteousness in the forefront of your mind; keep the Savior in the forefront of your mind. Then inspire; then lift. Dive in, roll up your sleeves with your teammate, and say, “Let’s get this leak fixed. Let’s get that windowpane replaced. Let’s get this balance sheet finalized, and then let’s go home.”

I think *after* you’ve done the one—cared for the person in righteousness—you can push hard on the other—getting the task done—but it would never work in reverse. I don’t think you could push and push while failing to remember that somebody’s feelings, someone’s spirit, is involved. Such leadership is a gift. You cannot get it without being meek and lowly. It’s a great question as to how to marry those two, because that is the issue here today. My guess is that’s what Brother Christensen lives with all day, every day in HR, and by extension, all of you as well. It is marrying the issues of Doctrine and Covenants 121 together. How can you be long-suffering, patient, kind, and charitable and still build the kingdom of God with the urgency that we all feel? However hard we run, we feel it’s not hard enough. With however little sleep we get, we feel we’ve got to get by on less sleep. Yes, there is an urgency that increases every passing day. These are the last days. But they will have to be addressed in a marriage of these virtues, and our success will have to key off of the powers of heaven which can only be controlled and handled on principles of righteousness.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: I love the connection you just made in terms of power. Those verses talk about “that they may be conferred upon us, it is true” (D&C 121:37). So it’s actually relatively easy to have the priesthood conferred on us. For us, we’ve been given a position. So that gives us the authority but doesn’t give us power.

ELDER HOLLAND: With violation it is amen to the power.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: And the power comes not only by having the authority, but power comes by how we live.

ELDER HOLLAND: This is a standard speech that I give to the missionaries. I love being with the missionaries; you can read them the Yellow Pages and they’re interested (*laughter*). I talk to them about power and authority. The phrase that’s used most regularly in the Book of Mormon—incessantly, repeatedly when it speaks of missionary service—is that missionaries always teach with “power and authority.”¹⁴ Sometimes it’s “great power and authority,”¹⁵ but that’s always the phrase.

So I make that very point, Brother Christensen. Authority they have. They’ve had authority given through hands laid on their heads. And sometimes they act like they don’t have that. They’re terrified if they see a minister walk down the street or even an educated businessman. They need to have more confidence. They have got more authority than anyone in the world.

But the other thing they need—power—is a much more personal issue. We can bestow the authority, but the power comes from righteous living. The power comes from their own rectitude and their own determination, their own seeking and remembering the very things that we’ve talked about here. In our lives, we often don’t act like we have authority, and we don’t live to receive and demonstrate power. We are moving in second gear; we idle along when what the Lord is calling for, once we get this right, is to floorboard it. You know, “Let’s move!”

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Thank you. I think there’s a question over here. Please.

COUNCIL: IT’S NOT ABOUT ME

MALE PARTICIPANT: We’ve talked a lot about how individually we can be leaders, but I’d like your perspective on how we as leaders can work as councils to solve some of these more difficult challenges.



ELDER HOLLAND: Great, that question fits with everything we're trying to do in the Church these days. We are pleading for leaders to sit in council. So it's a great contemporary thought, an eternal thought. We believe that there were councils in heaven before the world was. I've already referred to Creation. When we talk about "the Gods" and the work of Creation, I'm told that in the Hebrew, that references *clusters*—plural. *Elohim* is a plural noun. So these are people working together—men and women, gods and goddesses.

There's probably a little bit in us all that pushes us to be macho or to be able to play the trump card all the time. Well, in this work things shouldn't always be about us. It shouldn't be. It should be about God and the Savior, about the work and other people. If we could really believe that, I think it should be a bit easier to be respectful and say, "What's your idea? What's her idea? How might he contribute?" We've got a real incentive in the gospel to do that, but we probably don't do it often enough. There's a little of the self-serving, there's a little bit of the vain, there's a little bit of individualism in us that we want to do well or look good or whatever. For the good of the work, we need to set that aside.

Again, that is one of the advantages we have working for the Church. I don't know whether I could do that very well working for corporation X out in the world. I don't know how much I could buy into it. I guess if I took their salary, I could buy into their mission out of duty. But in the Church it is *really* easy for us to see "This is bigger than I am. This is a more important work than anything else, and it's not about me." If we could remember some of those things, it would get a lot easier to include other people. Ronald Reagan had a little plaque on his desk that said, "There's no limit to what a man can do . . . if he doesn't mind who gets the credit."¹⁶ That's just one of those little aphorisms that must be true. If we could have a little less vanity and a little more lowliness and meekness of heart, we could take the lid off the work.

Thanks for asking because that's a very current issue in the Church. Especially as we respect women—women in the Church, women in the workplace, women in the home, women in marriages. We can do better in this regard.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Thank you. Next, please.

PARABLES ARE LEADERSHIP LESSONS

MALE PARTICIPANT: As we seek to become more faithful administrators and leaders and teachers, what are some examples in the life of the Savior that you feel will guide us in becoming more faithful and more competent in our administrative responsibilities?

ELDER HOLLAND: You could open to almost any page in the scriptures and find examples. I can't think of a parable, a miracle, or a lesson that wouldn't add something to our training. I would say there are dozens, maybe hundreds, of these examples.

Let me use one teaching that comes to my mind. Do you remember the parable of the employer who is hiring for working in the vineyard? He hires some people in the morning, some mid morning, some at noon, and some in the afternoon. He's hiring all day long and hires clear up to eleven o'clock, figuratively speaking, then he pays them all the same salary.

Our telestial and unmeek selves want to say, "That isn't fair. I've worked all day long and this so-and-so comes along at eleven o'clock and gets the same salary?" What's wrong with that? What's wrong with that assessment, that evaluation? The Savior answered in the parable, "What is it to you if I choose to be kind?" "How does it hurt you that I have blessed somebody else?" That is a fundamental question that we ought to work through in our life before it's over. Why do we feel damaged when somebody else is blessed? There's something so competitive in us. We say, "I've got to be equal. I've got to have my rights. I don't want anybody to get a leg-up on me." And what He's saying is "I love all of you equally."



By the way, in that parable everybody was treated fairly. The man who went to work in the morning was very glad to have the job. He was looking for work. If he hadn't gotten the job, if he hadn't gotten paid, he would not have had anything. He was hired for an agreed-upon wage, and he received it. He was treated fairly. He got all that he was promised and maybe a little more, for all I know. But rather than be glad that he had work, he had payment, and his needs were taken care of, suddenly he's looking glum and saying, "Well, that guy didn't work as hard as I did." And we're stressed out over some sort of competitiveness that really has nothing to do with being paid properly.

We've seen this in our children. Hasn't every parent learned that the one who cuts the cake does not get to choose the piece? If you want to guarantee a fifty-fifty, precise cut, you let one child cut and the other choose. We don't have to be parents very long before we learn that. There is unfortunately a bit of that childishness in all of us, and we need to get over it. We need to be really tickled if someone else not only got an equal piece of the cake, which is what they got in the parable—they all got the same payment—but we ought to be even more tickled if someone else got a *bigger* piece of the cake. Maybe they need it more. Maybe that's what God would do—give to the needy. Maybe we're a little bit more like God if we could just get past thinking, "Is somebody outstripping me? Is somebody getting more than I get?"

That's one scriptural example that leaps to mind, but there are hundreds. Every parable, every lesson, every miracle seems to me to address the question you've raised. So I would invite you to immerse yourself in the life of the Savior and soak up every piece of instruction that He gives.

Another example comes to mind. We all know the parable of the treasure in the field: the farmer who goes out and finds the treasure, sells all that he has and buys the field in order to claim the treasure. One interpretation of that story is that we are the farmer, and the gospel as the treasure. That's a good way to read it. But what if the Savior is the farmer and we're the treasure? What if He was out in the ministry and found you, sold all that He had, gave everything in His possession to embrace the treasure, the best thing in His life—you? I'm not sure we think of each other that way. I am not sure we think of employees that way. I'm not sure we think of *anybody* that way enough—spouses or children or grandchildren or friends or neighbors. But we should.

I think every story in the scriptures has something that takes us back to this grand reassurance that Brother Christensen mentioned: the hope and the happiness of the gospel, the peace of it, the charity and the faith of it. This is a gospel filled with encouragement. I think every story in the scriptures shows that to us.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: This is wonderful. Thank you. I think there was a question over here.

WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

MALE PARTICIPANT: Elder Holland, you mentioned your wife, Pat. What you would teach us about her and what you've learned from her about leading as the Savior would lead?

ELDER HOLLAND: Well, I know what it means to have God say to Adam that everything he had and everything that was done up to that point in the Creation was not enough, not sufficient, not complete. No, *the* crowning act of Creation was the creation of a woman. That is true in my life, and I think it's true in all the annals of eternity. I'm not putting down men; I'm not minimizing men. I am a man. I respect the priesthood. I know something of our duties. But even though there is relatively little in the scriptures about women (I think that's just the Hebraic nature of the records), in what stories we know and what stories we have in our own lives, every indication declares that it has been the women in our lives who have saved our hopes and encouraged our dreams.

I think in some ways women are often more sensitive to the Spirit and to righteousness than men are. I'm in this Church primarily because of the efforts of two women. Whatever I've been in my life and in the gospel, I owe to my mother and my wife. I owe my mother for my birth and the first 20 years of my life, and my wife for five decades of



devotion since then. That is the simple truth. Pat is, to this day, the most clarion call of truth in my life. There is no voice, no communication, no inspiration from any mortal in my life that compares with the influence she has. And I think that's the way it is supposed to be. If I weren't so hardheaded, didn't keep such long hours, and were less irritable when I got home, I'd be a lot better even than I am. But what I *do* have, I owe to those two women.

It was my mother who made sure I went to Primary. It was my mother who every Sunday had me in my Aaronic Priesthood duties with a clean, pressed shirt. She did everything to bless my life. Then Pat picked up that challenge as we courted and married. She bore our children and raised them. She gave me her life and supports me in whatever I do and wherever I go—distances no husband should have ever required his wife to travel. That's how it's been.

I'm coming up on 71 years, and I've got a 20-50 split there—20 years from my mother and 50 from my wife. No influence has ever equaled that, nor do I think it was supposed to. I think that is who women are. However good we are to our wives, brethren, we're not good enough. I'll just say that as part of my own confession, and I'll make it part of yours (*laughter*). However good we are to them and toward them, it is not good enough.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Thank you. Let's take one more question, if we have one. In the back.

DEALING WITH UNDERPERFORMERS

MALE PARTICIPANT: In the spirit of “when you fail, I fail,” how do we strike a balance with employees who are underperforming and need a lot of micromanagement for extensive periods of time compared to their ability to use their agency to act for themselves?

ELDER HOLLAND: In saying that “if you fail, I fail,” I don't minimize that there are people not suited for their work, who may be a round peg in a square hole. Or perhaps someone, for any given task, may not bring enough firepower or inherent capability to accomplish it. I acknowledge that, and I think those are real issues in employment and in our workaday worlds. In those cases I think we have to consult and talk openly. It is back to setting expectations and seeing if this person can understand that these are the expectations; this is what we need to do to work here; this is the task we have to accomplish. We do that lovingly and kindly and patiently, with long-suffering—but we do it.

If you can get communication going there and love truly exists, but you and he or she realize that this isn't going to work, then I do think we have to make other arrangements. That has to be done as carefully and gently as it can be. Maybe it's lateral movement to another position, but lateral movement doesn't always solve things. It's wonderful if it can, but that depends on such things as vacancies and skill sets. So maybe this means severing employment, which is the last thing any of us like to do when people need the work, especially in the economy we're in. I acknowledge all of those as facts of life in employment.

But having said all of that, we ought to go to the nth degree and do all we can, to know that we've tried, that we have communicated well and we didn't blindside them, that we didn't ask them for a performance that they didn't even understand they were supposed to provide. We need to go the extra mile to be as good as we can be. (That is, after all, what this seminar is about.) And then if we come to a common understanding that things aren't going to work, if we've really tried and shown compassion and shown the love that I talked about earlier, I think most people will understand and can live with the disappointment.

BROTHER CHRISTENSEN: Thank you, Elder Holland. I think, given the time, we'll conclude this part of the conversation. On behalf of all of us, I want to thank you for your taking the time and for the teaching that you've given us. I want to express our honor and our respect for the role and assignment that you have and the keys that you bear, and also our love for you as one of the Brethren and as a colleague and a friend. Thank you so much for being here. We would love to have any concluding comments that you may have.



CLOSING TESTIMONY

ELDER HOLLAND: Thank you, Ralph. I'm back where I was when I started. I feel I should be asking you the questions and hearing your answers. You're better at this than I am; you're better people than I am. But I'm honored; I'm honored to work with you. I obviously don't know all of you, but I do see many of you coming and going in the building. Some of you I have had more immediate contact with than others. I couldn't love you more than I do.

I'm grateful and humbled that such good people do what you do. I know that the Church doesn't pay as well as many places. We have it better than our predecessors did years ago, but I know that you scrimp and save and worry about how to get orthodontic work done and to keep your children on missions. I know all about that. I'm grateful to you. I love you and honor you. And I say that on behalf of the First Presidency and the Twelve.

We don't get many chances to talk to you like this. It's one of the reasons, frankly, that I wanted to do it when Brother Christensen asked me. When would we ever see a group like this and be able to say anything to you about our love for you? So, thank you. Thank you for serving. Thank you for being faithful. Thank you for trying to do the best that you can and to live the lives that we've been describing here. Surely there's no other HR seminar on the planet with a subject quite like this, where we could get together and have this kind of discussion about what the Savior's leadership qualities are. What a delight to be able to work in such an environment. There are a lot of things that we do have in Church employment that are very special, and I'm grateful for that.

That leads me to say the only thing I want to say in closing. That is that the gospel of Jesus Christ means everything to me—everything. There isn't a dream that I have, there isn't an ideal that I cherish, there isn't a virtue that I want that hasn't been provided to me in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

My father is a convert, so I know something of a convert's life and the challenge of the first generation in the Church. That knowledge has always been a blessing to me. I can identify with a lot of people in the Church who have their ups and downs because I saw that in my family and in my newly converted first-generation father. I've always counted that experience as a blessing that I gained from my father's side of the family.

On my mother's side of the family, we're ancient. We are a pioneer family from the Church's first decade. I count that as a blessing also—that I know what it is like to be fifth- or sixth-generation Latter-day Saint and have the heritage of all those great stories we tell about our pioneer ancestors.

I'm grateful that I've been able to identify with both halves of the Church, so to speak. Whichever side I look at, whatever element of that history I examine—whether it's finding the gospel as a new convert or having it passed down by legions of people who sacrificed and served and gave their lives for it—in either case, I know that it is the most cherished possession of my soul. I'm grateful for a loving Father in Heaven, for His loving and divine Son, and for the gifts of the Spirit that help us wend our way in a telestial world. I'm grateful for the gospel of Jesus Christ. It marks everything I cherish in this world. It has given me every blessing that I have, and it holds the only hope that I possess in time or eternity.

I'm not a very neutral person on this subject. I am not a good person to talk to about whether someone ought to join the Church or not, or whether someone thinks the Church is true or not, or whether or not someone can put up with the imperfections of the Brethren. I'm not a very good person to talk to about that. My fierce loyalty to the divinity of this work is the loyalty I'll take to my grave. If you could crowd around me at the cemetery, if you could come up close to the coffin and hear the last words these lips will ever express, it will be that this is God's eternal truth. This is the truth: Joseph Smith saw the Father and the Son, They watch over us with their love, angels come and go at Their command, and the Atonement has saved us all.



I want my last words, then and now, to be that Jesus is the Christ. I've borne witness since I was a little boy in the old St. George tabernacle in Primary. I bore witness all those years, but now I *am* a witness. I pledge my witness and I'll die as a witness to the divinity of this work, the goodness of God and the peace that "passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). All the things that this world needs, we have. I pledge my best effort to stand shoulder to shoulder with you in providing that. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

Notes

1. LeadershipPattern.ldschurch.org.
2. "An High Priest of Good Things to Come," *Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 37.
3. Friedrich Nietzsche, as cited in Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (2006), ix.
4. An anonymous ancient proverb, sometimes wrongly attributed to Euripides.
5. See John 2:14–15.
6. Isaac Newton, in Charles S. Jones, *Game, Set, Match: A Tennis Book for the Mind* (2002), 25.
7. See Moroni 4–5; Doctrine and Covenants 20:75–79.
8. "Truth Reflects upon Our Senses," *Hymns*, no. 273.
9. See *History of the Church*, 2:478.
10. See Helaman 15:3; Doctrine and Covenants 95:1.
11. See Mosiah 3:17; 5:8.
12. See Romans 8:28.
13. See Matthew 16:26; Mark 8:36.
14. See, for example, 2 Nephi 1:25; Mosiah 13:6; 18:26; Alma 17:3; 3 Nephi 12:1; Moroni 8:28.
15. See, for example, Helaman 5:18; 6:5; 11:18.
16. See 144 Congressional Record 389 (1998). Attributed to Harry S. Truman.